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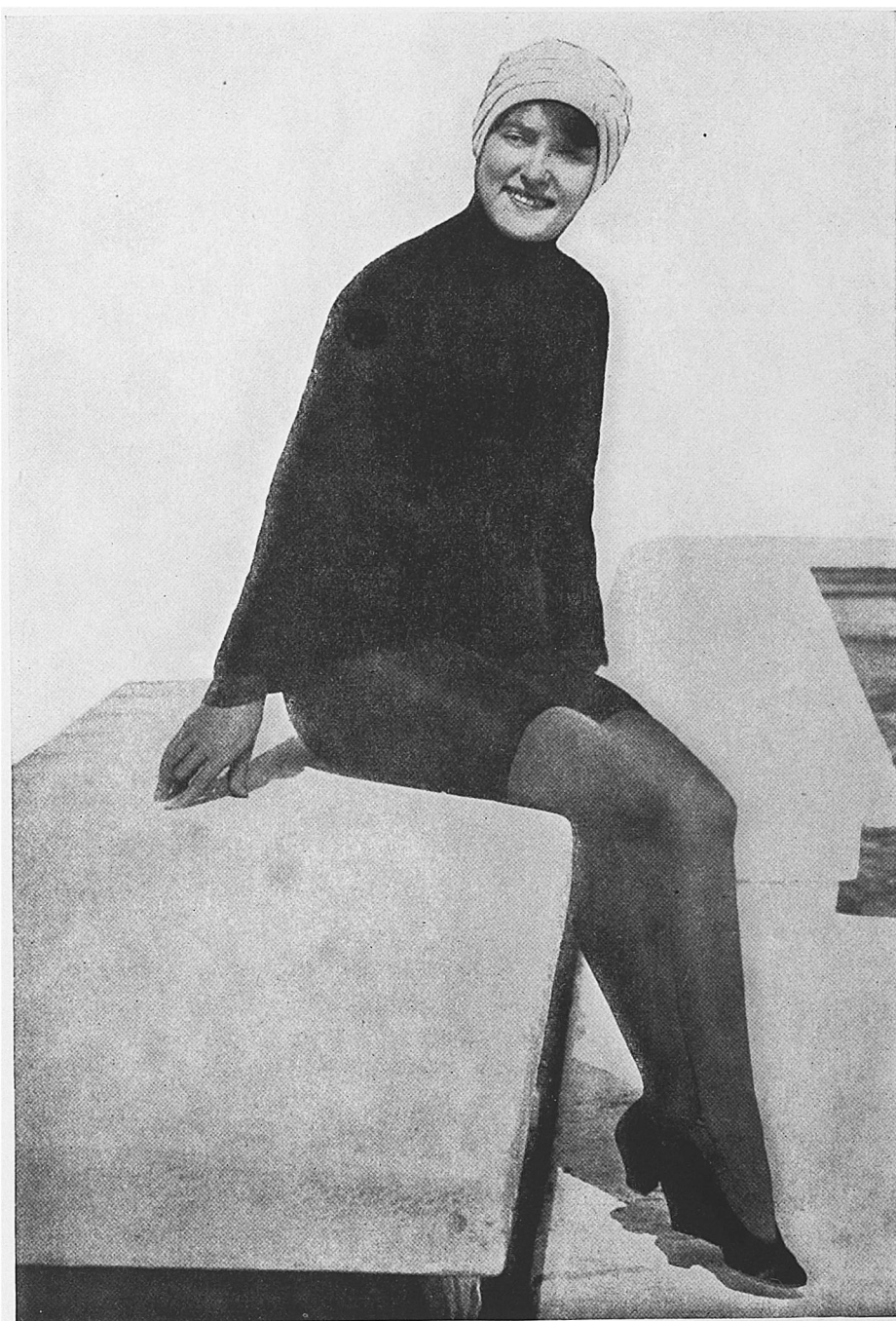
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Annette Kellermann

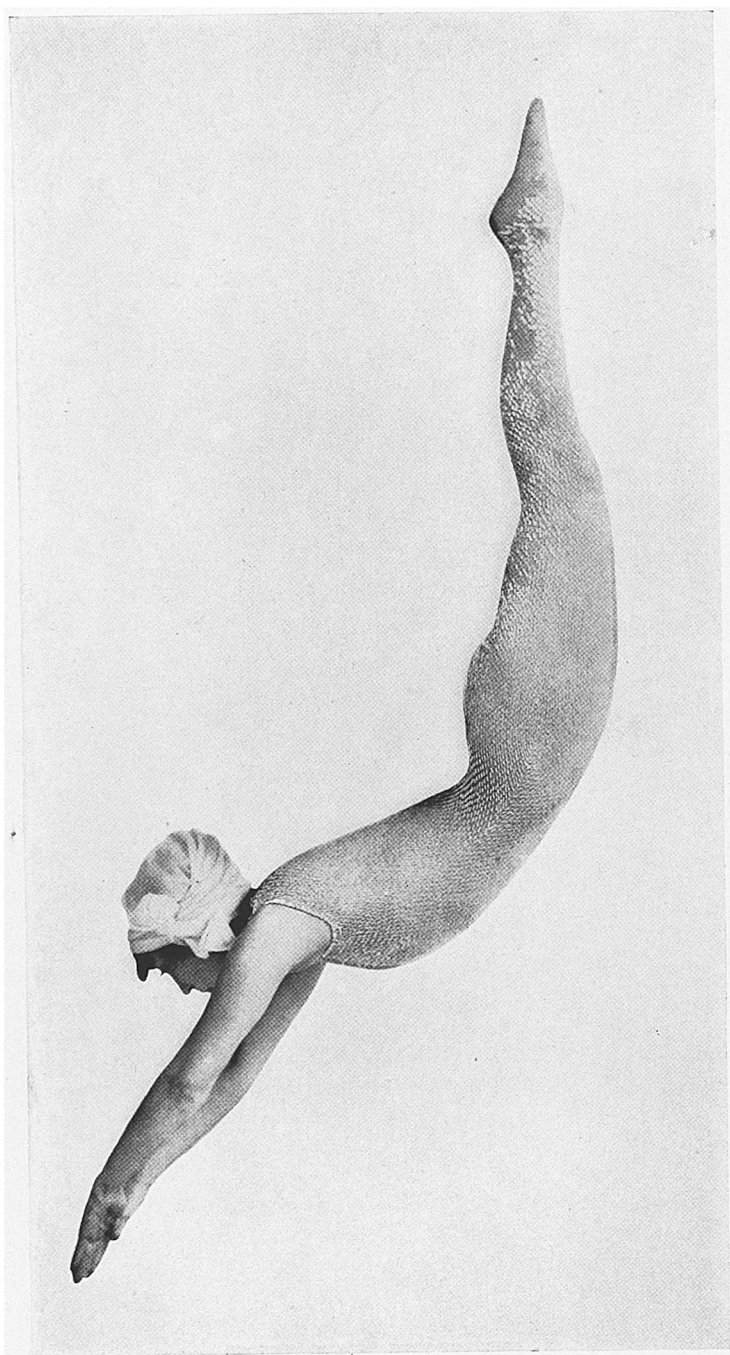
Annette Kellermann, who talks as vivaciously as she swims, says:

"If I posed like those sick art-pictures I never would have gotten by the censor. The nude seems always to be a question of posed attitudes, with their suggestiveness. I appear practically nude on the screen, yet in this respect I think my work is natural and healthy; I would not have attempted it otherwise."

"Poise," she said, "is the thing I most strive for in diving, or indeed in any part of my work. By poise I mean not only the general carriage of the body, but its particular movement in carrying out an act. When I dive, for example, I look up in the air, my arms out and my head up, and I always know at which moment I am poised just right, at which given point I get the right equilibrium to let myself drop successfully; the rest is done with my ankles and feet. I hate the spectacular, the 'stunt.' Finish of performance is what gives elegance to any feat of this nature; when in diving the grace of movement lasts from beginning to end, when, for example, the line formed by the body completes itself in the air and the body enters the water without a splash—then it is a finished performance. My drop from the swing in 'The Daughter of the Gods' is, I think, a fine illustration of this. There are only certain ways of getting grace of movement, natural ways, laws,—in fact—and nothing graceful can result from violating them. By attempting to make an impossible gesture or motion of body only awkwardness is the result; to raise, for instance, the arms and legs at the same time when in the swimming position is unnatural, it looks strained and is therefore ugly. In my work on the stage and for the screen I depend on no one part of the body but on all parts relatively to the whole; a runner will use only his legs, a shot-putter his right arm—you do not dance with your face or your head, though. The beauty of movement depends on the success of its muscular economy."



Annette Kellermann



Annette Kellermann

"The things I do seem to come naturally, as a result of my health and vigor, probably, too, as a result of my build." In this connection I mentioned the fact that her figure has been called a model of classical perfection. "I know I have been called a perfect woman," she said, "as to shape, but that title is ridiculous, because they judge from a pose. I hate to pose. You can take a dozen, a hundred or two hundred women, and if you could find them all of the same measurements, or nearly so, and pose them all at once in the same attitude, they might all look alike, but ask them to do something, ask them all to do the same thing and one will be a deeper breather, another will have a firmer step, another a clumsier carriage and so forth; the differences will suddenly appear very marked, although they looked alike before."

"Then, too, I have been compared to the Venus de Milo and Cleopatra—by photo—in regard to build. I don't know whether the Venus de Milo would be pleased with the idea, but I know I am not. I don't like the legs of the Greek Venuses. They are beef down to the heels. The modern woman is different to the ancient, she's developed along slimmer lines, her legs taper down to the ankles. I have a certain carriage and poise, for instance, and I try to do the things that back up that poise; I could not do them if I were shaped like the Venus de Milo. The charm of Greek women lay in their expression of repose, of calm, and whether they were more beautiful than we, is, of course, another question, but the body of today is more aggressive, it is slender, its beauty lies in a shape that expresses motion, that can *do* things."

"To keep the lines about such a figure in their right proportions requires a great amount of training. My work, especially, requires a lot; I have to do as much training as a sprinter or a prize-fighter. Some figures express one kind of movement best, others another, but my aim is to do everything in this field—not, however, from an art point of view so much as from a natural, a health point of view; the affectation about some of these so-called art pictures is simply distressing; they are always a pose."

I asked her if her work at the Hippodrome meant that she was giving up motion pictures, and she said, "No. Dumb work suits me. And then I have not a player's voice. On the other hand, the

movies are not for an actress; it often happens that an actress is very good on the stage and rather stupid when playing for the screen, simply because her voice is not given a chance. In this field there is a greater output and a greater freedom to introduce things that can never be introduced on the stage. Fairy tales, for instance, as in 'The Daughter of the Gods,' give a great chance for the arrangement of clothes and nudity, and often a fine fancy is displayed in their combination, unlike modern plays, which require dress unsuited to the human figure, as all modern dress is."

Returning to her swimming, Annette Kellermann said she considered it a pity that the women of this country do not take it up more. "The United States contains a hundred million people," she said, "but the proportion of them that can swim is surprisingly small among women. In Australia ninety per cent. of them can swim. With the awful bathing suits they have here all they need is an umbrella and a pair of rubbers. There are only a few right ways of keeping afloat and moving in the water, and these ways are known to experts; they can and should be taught. The self-taught swimmer, at least among women, is a badly-taught swimmer; in trying out a number of girls for their parts in 'The Daughter of the Gods,' it struck me that they were not moving naturally in the water, and though, when I told them so, they argued that they had been swimming all their lives, it was easy to see through their make-believe; they were employing the wrong stroke. But swimming should be all for fun's sake. I loathe champions and championship contests; it is great, of course, to be the best in one's line, but it means making a business of it and robbing it of its fun. If one is worried about covering a fraction of a second the worry will show; the agonizing expressions on the faces of competitors makes the thing almost hideous. I like to skate and I like to swim for fun. I like fun."



Here's the story—Bleumner, \$1,050, sold. Picasso, \$250, unsold. Derain, \$30, unsold.